

Message Text

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ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 MC-02

ACDA-05 AID-05 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 H-02 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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P R 071726Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3842

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 4099

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, BE

SUBJECT: EUROPEAN AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY AND F-104 REPLACEMENT

REF: BRUSSELS 3979

1. IN CONTEXT OF COMING TO A DECISION ON PURCHASE OF F-104 REPLACEMENT, BELGIUM AND NETHERLANDS HAVE BROUGHT ABOUT DISCUSSIONS WITH ALLIES ON A "EUROPEAN PREFERENCE" DOCTRINE WITH RESPECT TO AIRCRAFT ACQUISITIONS. REFTEL REPORTED ON APRIL 30 MEETING IN BRUSSELS ATTENDED BY FRG, BELGIAN, DUTCH AND FRENCH REPRESENTATIVES. HERewith ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WE HAVE GATHERED HERE ON STATE OF PLAY.

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2. FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCES TELL US THAT ONE OR MORE

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS WILL BE HELD, ALTHOUGH NO DEFINITE DATE HAS BEEN SET FOR NEXT. THEY SAY THAT FRG SET AS CONDITION FOR FURTHER PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSION THAT ITALY AND UK BE INVITED TO JOIN GROUP. AS OF MAY 7 UK AND ITALIAN RESPONSES HAD NOT REACHED BRUSSELS. (LE MONDE REPORT MAY 6 FROM BRUSSELS FORECASTING SIX-NATION MEETING POSSIBLY THIS WEEK APPEARS TO BE INCORRECT.)

3. BELGIANS' AIM IN THIS EXERCISE IS TO CALL FRENCH HAND WHEN IT INSISTS THAT A VOTE FOR MIRAGE AS NEW LWF IS A VOTE FOR A EUROPEAN AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY. FRANCE IS ASKED, FOR EXAMPLE, WHETHER IT IS PREPARED TO COMMIT TO ACQUIRE MRCA (PRESUMABLY AT PRICE OF SCRAPPING ITS ACF PROJECT FOR THE 1980'S). AS REPORTED, FRENCH HAVE MADE NO PROMISES. FRENCH POSITION REMAINS: LET'S LAUNCH EUROPEAN PREFERENCE DOCTRINE WITH MULTI-NATIONAL PURCHASE OF F-1/M53 AND THEN SEE WHERE WE GO AFTER THAT.

4. BEHIND THIS HASTILY-ORGANIZED EFFORT TO DETERMINE WHETHER "EUROPEAN PREFERENCE" DOCTRINE ON AIRCRAFT ACQUISITION IS ANYTHING MORE SUBSTANTIAL THAN FRENCH SALES TALK IS A DIVISION WITHIN BELGIUM ON LINGUISTIC LINES WHICH MAKES A DECISION ON LWF PROCURMENT DIFFICULT FOR TINDEMANS GOVERNMENT. FOR EMOTIONAL REASONS FRANCOPHONE BELGIANS WANT GOVERNMENT TO BUY FRENCH. FLEMISH SIDE IS SOLIDLY PRO-F-16 BECAUSE, THEY SAY, IT IS CLEARLY BETTER AND CHEAPER. SOME INFLUENTIAL FLEMISH POLITICIANS, WE ARE RELIABLY INFORMED, WOULD URGE GOVERNMENT TO BUY A SMALL NUMBER OF BRITISH JAGUARS AND PUT OFF BASIC LWF DECISION FOR COUPLE OF YEARS RATHER THAN EITHER (1) BUY MIRAGE OR (2) RISK GOVERNMENT CRISIS OVER PURCHASE DECISION.

5. OUR INFORMANTS BELIEVE THAT TINDEMANS MEETING WITH GISCARD IN PARIS MAY 9 IS LIKELY TO BE OF DECISIVE SIGNIFICANCE OF BELGIAN DECISION RE AIRCRAFT PURCHASE AND ON FUTURE OF EUROPEAN PREFERENCE DISCUSSION. IF GISCARD DOES NOT COME UP WITH SOME CONVINCING COMMITMENT TO A EUROPEAN DEFENSE EFFORT, AS DISTINCT FROM MERE SURVIVAL OF DASSAULT ENTERPRISE, BELGIAN-INSPIRED CONFIDENTIAL

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SEARCH FOR A EUROPEAN PREFERENCE DOCTRINE ON AIRCRAFT IS LIKELY TO BECOME ACADEMIC EXERCISE.

6. MAY 12 CONSORTIUM COUNTRY MOD MEETING REPORTED PARA 5 REFTEL HAS BEEN CALLED OFF.

7. SHRONTZ PARTY HERE WOULD APPRECIATE HAVING ANY COMMENT OR FURTHER LIGHT EMBASSIES ARE ABLE TO SHED

ON THIS MATTER.FIRESTONE

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